

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-12 /095 W
-----105042 101121Z /20

P 101000Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6353
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0158

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SY, IZ, AG
SUBJ: STATUS OF POSSIBLE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ

1. PREIDENT BOUMEDIENE'S VISIT TO BAGHDAD LAST WEEK AND HIS ANTICIPATED ARRIVAL IN DAMASCUS JANUARY 10 HAVE FUELED LOCAL SPECULATION THAT SOME SORT OF SYRIAN-IRAQI RAPPROACHMENT MAY BE IN THE OFFING. ACCORDING TO FRENCH EMBASSY SOURCE, HOWEVER, BOUMEDIENE WAS ONLY PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN HIS EFFORTS TO MODIFY IRAQI ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SYRIAN REGIME. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM FRENCH EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD, IRAQIS TOLD BOUMEDINE THEY WOULD AGREE TO DROP TWO SPECIFIC CONDITIONS THEY HAD LAID DOWN FOR RECONCILIATION (SYRIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AND EXPLICIT SYRIAN RENUNCIATION OF UNSC

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RESES 242 AND 338) BUT THEY STILL INSISTED ON A SYRIAN RENUNCIATION OF EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL SOLUTION WITH ISRAEL. FRENCH REPORT ALSO CONTAINED NOTHING REGARDING SPECIFIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RIVAL BAATH COMMANDS. ON BASIS THIS REPORT AND FACT THAT BOUMEDIENE HAS TRAVELLED TO OTHER ARAB CAPITALS BEFORE VISITING DAMASCUS, FRENCH EMBOFF CONCLUDED, RECONCILIATION DOES NOT APPEAR IMMINENT.

2. COMMENT: IF, HOWEVER, IRAQIS HAVE DROPPED THEIR TWO SPECIFIC CONDITIONS, THIS IS MOST CONCRETE INDICATION IN SOME TIME THAT THEY HAVE ANY INTEREST AT ALL IN BECOMING RECONCILED WITH ASSAD REGIME. SYRIANS, FOR THEIR PART, HAVE BEEN AVOIDING ANY CRITICISM OF IRAQ IN PUBLIC MEDIA AND WOULD WELCOME IRAQI ADHERENCE TO TRIPOLI FRONT AS STEP BOWARDS BROADER IRAQI-SYRIAN RECONCILIATION. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, HOWEVER, SYRIANS HAVE NOT YET MOVED TO REOPEN LAND BORDER BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ.
MURPHY

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